

April 10, 1978

LB 592, 937, 889, 737

Legislature with the recommendation that it be advanced to General File with amendments.

Mr. President, Senator Warner asks unanimous consent to print amendments to LB 937. Senator Koch to LB 889A and Senator Koch to 889.

SPEAKER LUEDTKE: All right, LB 737. Proceed Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: Read LB 737.

SPEAKER LUEDTKE: Chair recognizes Senator Koch.

SENATOR KOCH: Mr. President, members of the body. A couple of weeks ago we were involved in a discussion over this piece of legislation and I'll be very brief in my remarks. Presently when the young lady requests a marriage license there is a test that is required and that has to do with venereal disease. What this bill proposes to do is add one more test, that has to do with rubella or German measles. It would add a provision requiring a female applicant for a marriage license to present laboratory evidence that they are immune to German measles. This would not be required with the exception of the bill if the female applicant was over 50 years of age, or had been surgically sterilized, or presented laboratory evidence of a prior test showing immunity, or presented a physician's statement to the fact that this would be not in the best interest of her health, or if there was a religious philosophy which was diametrically opposed to this type of a test and a medical science. In the late 60's there was a tremendous outbreak of rubella or German measles. The Atlanta Center for Disease estimates that there were up to 30,000 birth defects as a result of this. Not counting the great number of miscarriages. Presently there are three states that have a law similar to the one that I am proposing to you at this time. By the way, this isn't my first attempt. I brought this bill in here the first year that I came as a rookie. Now, I'm just happy to see it on the floor and hopefully the body will understand. What we are attempting to do here is prevent birth defects where ever possible. Because you know presently in the State of Nebraska we are spending considerable sums of money to try to work with those children who have handicapping conditions or who have birth defects. Here to me is a piece of legislation that would be preventative in its efforts, and I think, not unreasonable. I know that there are some that wonder whether or not this is a needed piece of legislation. In visiting with gynecologist's and others I have been assured that there are...there is a far greater need for this than we realize. Many cases the German measles are never reported. Presently in Nebraska we have no accurate test or count as to how badly this type of legislation is needed. I would read to you an article that I clipped some time ago which says that perhaps the greatest tragedy is that there are many grim statistics particularly as it relates to rubella. In 1969 there was a vaccine made available and it is virtually 100% accurate in its immunity. Yet, it is also amazing, the article goes on, the number of women who fail to take this simple precaution to allow themselves the privilege of carrying a child to full birth without defects that may be caused by German measles. According to Dr. Edward Goodkin, an obstetrician and a gynecologist, Chairman